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Five San Quentin Deaths Charged To Young Lawyer

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (AP) — Five counts of murder were filed Tuesday against attorney Stephen Mitchell Bingham, described by San Quentin Prison authorities as the last man to visit Soledad Brother George Jackson before an escape attempt that left six men dead.

Marin County Dist Atty. Bruce Bales told a news conference his investigation had convinced him that Jackson could only have obtained a gun used in the violence during a visit from the 29-year-old attorney.

Bingham, grandson of the late former Connecticut Gov. and U.S. Sen. Hiram Bingham, is charged in the slashing and shooting deaths of three guards and two inmates under a California law which holds an accomplice equally responsible with the person who actually commits a crime.

Jackson was shot dead by tower guards outside the prison Adjustment Center where he and the other dead inmates were housed.

Prison officials have said that Jackson underwent a thorough "skin" search before meeting with Bingham in a visiting room and pulled a 9mm pistol from a wig on returning to the Adjustment Center, setting off the escape attempt.

The prison says the gun had been purchased by a Black Panther.

"I have reached the conclusion," Bales said, "that there is no other way that Jackson could have obtained the death gun except during his visit with Bingham just before the killings commenced."

In a criminal complaint filed in Marin County Municipal Court, Bales said that within half an hour after Jackson pulled the gun, officers Frank P. DeLeon, 44, Paul Krasenes, 52, and Sgt. Jere Graham, 39, lay dead in Jackson's cell, two killed by gunshot wounds to the back of the head and one by deep cuts to the throat.

The bodies of inmates John Lynn, 29, and Ronald L. Kane, 28, also were found in the cell area, Bales said, each of deep cuts to the throat.

Bales said Jackson "killed at least one of the correctional officers" with the pistol, which was found on his body along with clips containing live ammunition.

The district attorney sid it would be "not appropriate" to charge Bingham in Jackson's death.

Bingham is charged under the same California law under which black militant Angela Davis is accused of murder, kidnaping and conspiracy in the Aug. 7, 1970, Marin County courthouse shootout that took four lives, including that of George Jackson's 17-year-old brother, Jonathan.

Since the Aug. 21 bloodshed, eight San Quentin prison guards have resigned, and Acting Associate Warden Joseph R. O'Brien blamed the resignations Tuesday on "people getting depressed to the point where they want to step out."